

## Appendix B-1. Case Study Interview Protocol for Administrators

Notes:

- Interviews are expected to take no more than 90 minutes.
- District Administrator respondents may include the special education director, EL director, federal programs director, assessment director, student/instructional services director, or their designees.
- School Administrator respondents may include the principal, assistant principal, or department chair.
- Text in [brackets] indicates instructional notes to the interviewer. Text in *italics* indicates actual interview questions.

### 1. Introduction

[Thank respondent for their time. Confirm that they received and had a chance to read the Interview Information Sheet.]

*First, I want to thank you for taking the time to talk with us today. My name is [name] and this is [name of the other site visitor]. Before we get started, did you have a chance to read the Interview Information Sheet that provides background on this study and what we'll be doing in the interview?*

[If they did not receive/read the Interview Information Sheet, hand them a copy to keep and briefly summarize the purpose and content of the interview, and how the results will be used. Then define what is meant by English Learners.]

*For the purpose of our conversation today, when we talk about English learners, we're referring to those students who the district has determined to be of EL status based on results of an English language proficiency (ELP) assessment. This would include students eligible for English language instructional services, as well as those students who have been reclassified as former ELs within the prior two years. Do you have any questions about the study or the interview? [Answer any questions.]*

[Provide them with the Informed Consent form for their review and signature.]

*Your participation in the interview and responding to individual interview questions is voluntary. You may decide not to participate or to end your participation at any time. This form outlines some of the issues in the Interview Information Sheet with regard to potential risks, benefits, and confidentiality. Please take a minute to read it and let me know if you have any questions. I'd like to ask you to sign it before we begin.*

[After obtaining their signed consent form, request permission to record.]

*Before we begin, I want to check with you to see if it would be okay if we record our conversation today. We will try to take careful notes as we talk, but recording the conversation will assist us making sure our notes are accurate. We will not share the recordings and notes with anyone outside of the project. Would that be okay with you?*

[Once permission to record is obtained, begin recording the interview.]

## **2. Respondent Role**

[The respondent's job title will be obtained prior to interview. The question below will be asked to initiate the interview and provide context for the subsequent interview questions.]

- 1. First, I'd like to get a little bit of background information on your role. As [respondent's job title], what are your general job responsibilities and how do those responsibilities put you in contact with English learners who have or may have disabilities?*

## **3. English Learner Population**

[Information on the district's [school's] EL population will have been obtained prior to site visit via CCD, district and school web sites, or direct request to district contact. The questions below on EL population should be asked only if necessary.]

- 1. I'd like to ask you for a little bit of context on the EL students in your district [school]. How would you describe the current EL student population in your district [school]?  
a) Languages  
b) Parent educational background  
c) Types of parent employment  
d) Students born in the U.S./Years in the U.S.*

[Probe: Homogeneity/heterogeneity within the EL population]

- 2. How has the EL student population changed over the last 5 years? E.g., languages, parent educational background, parent employment, years in the US, etc.*

## **4. Pre-referral/Early Intervening: Procedures (RQ 1)**

[Any written policies of the state and district related to pre-referral/early intervening with ELs will have been obtained prior to site visit via state/district web sites or direct request to district contact. The questions below will be asked when policies/procedures are not covered in written documents or when policies/procedures require clarification.]

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| <p>1. <i>I'd like to ask you about interventions with ELs prior to referral to special education. What are your district's [school's] procedures for intervening with ELs struggling academically or behaviorally in the general education setting?</i></p> <p>[Probe: Screening vision, hearing, other health issues; Observations of classroom instruction; Consideration of EL student's achievement in relation to true peers; Consideration of student's opportunity to learn the necessary content and skills]</p> |
| <p>2. <i>Do pre-referral/early intervening procedures with ELs vary depending upon the:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) <i>grade level,</i></li><li>b) <i>content area,</i></li><li>c) <i>level of English proficiency,</i></li><li>d) <i>years in the US or in the district,</i></li><li>e) <i>language background, or</i></li><li>f) <i>something else?</i></li></ul>   |
| <p>3. <i>What personnel are involved in pre-referral/early intervening procedures with ELs?</i></p> <p>[Probe: Use of specially trained personnel, e.g. bilingual educators]</p>   |
| <p>4. <i>How are the parents of ELs involved during the pre-referral/early intervening stage?</i></p> <p>[Probe: Kinds of information provided to parents; Degree of parent engagement in decision making; Stage at which parent is brought in]</p>  |
| <p>5. <i>What conditions must be met for an EL student to be assessed for special education eligibility?</i></p>   |
| <p>6. <i>How are the (pre-referral/early intervening) procedures similar to or different from those used with non-EL students?</i></p> <p>[Probe: Methods and process used for pre-referral decision making; Personnel involved; Involvement of parents; Time to formal special education referral; Factors to consider for ELs]</p>   |

## 5. Assessment and Identification: Procedures (RQs 1, 2, and 3)

[Any written policies of the state and district related to assessment and identification of ELs for special education will have been obtained prior to site visit via state/ district web sites or direct request to district contact. The questions below will be asked when policies/procedures are not covered in written documents or when policies/procedures require confirmation or clarification.]

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| <p>1. <i>Let's talk more about the assessment and identification of EL students for special education. What is your district's [school's] procedure for evaluating EL students for potential disabilities and determining their eligibility for special education?</i></p> |
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2. In what ways do assessment and identification procedures with ELs vary depending upon the:
- grade level,
  - language group,
  - extent of English language proficiency,
  - type of disability, e.g., LD, ED, ADHD, Autism, speech or sensory impairments, mental disabilities, or
  - something else?

[Probe: Tools and instruments used in assessment and identification processes]

3. When assessing ELs for specific learning disabilities, what procedures are used in the district [school] to rule out special factors such as limited English proficiency, cultural factors, or environmental or economic disadvantage?

[Probe: IDEA 2004 exclusionary clause]

4. If an EL student moving into the district [school] already has an IEP in place, what are your procedures for serving that student?

[Probe: Re-evaluation procedures]

5. How are the parents of ELs involved during assessment and identification procedures?

[Probe: Kinds of information provided to parents; Degree of parent engagement in decision making; Stage at which parent is brought in]

6. How are assessment and identification procedures similar to or different from those used with non-EL students?

[Probe: Methods and processes used; Tools and assessment instruments used; Accommodations; Language of assessment; Involvement of parents; Factors to consider for ELs]

7. What personnel are involved in assessment and identification processes for both non-EL and EL students? Which personnel are only involved in assessment and identification of ELs? Are there certain credentials and/or background required of any or all of the personnel when an EL student is being assessed?

[Probe: Specially trained personnel, e.g., interpreters and bilingual assessors]

8. How many specialists, if any, are in your district with credentialing and/or teaching degrees in both special education and English-as-a-second-language (ESL), English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), or bilingual education?

## 6. Assessment and Identification: Administrator Perceptions (RQs 1, 2, and 3)

1. What challenges does your district [school] encounter in the assessment and identification of ELs with disabilities? In which way?

<p>2. How do the challenges vary across:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) language background,</li><li>b) level of English proficiency,</li><li>c) years in the US or in the district,</li><li>d) grade level,</li><li>e) type of disability, e.g., LD, ED, ADHD, Autism, speech or sensory impairments, mental disabilities, or</li><li>f) something else?</li></ul>
<p>3. What strategies has your district [school] adopted for handling the challenges related to the assessment and identification of ELs for special education? Are they effective?</p>
<p>4. Are there policies, procedures, or practices that you believe hasten or delay the identification of ELs with disabilities? What are they?</p>
<p>5. In your district [school], what is your sense of the overall knowledge personnel have of the differences between learning issues and second language issues?</p>
<p>6. What professional development has your district [school] provided to staff over the past two years related to ELs with special needs? How effective are these activities? What is the plan for this year [and next three years if information is available]?</p>
<p>7. What are your district's [school's] strengths related to assessing and identifying ELs with disabilities?</p>
<p>8. What additional resources or tools would help you in your efforts?</p>
<p>9. Are there any policies, procedures, practices, or staff qualifications that you believe are linked to the appropriate identification of ELs with disabilities? What are they?</p>

## 7. Patterns of Special Education Identification: Administrator Perceptions (RQ 4)

[District- and school-level data on special education identification of ELs and non-ELs will have been obtained prior to site visit via district/school web sites or direct request to district contact. These will be used during the questions below.]

<p>1. The data on special education placement of ELs in your district [school] shows [share data on EL special education placement by grade level and by disability as available]. How do you interpret these patterns in your district? What factors do you think would have contributed to the pattern of special education identification for ELs in the district?</p>
<p>2. Are there subgroups in the population of ELs with disabilities that have unique patterns that you think are masked by the summary data, for example, by language background, level of English proficiency? [include grade level and type of disability if not shown in data] If so, please describe the pattern.</p>
<p>3. Do you think the pattern has changed over time and, if so, what factors have contributed to the change?</p>

## 8. Exit from Language Instruction Education Programs: Procedures (RQ 5)

[Any written policies of the state and district related to the exiting of EL students from LIEPs as well as information on district LIEP models will have been obtained via state/district web sites or request of district contact prior to site visit. The questions below will be asked when information is not covered in written documents or requires confirmation or clarification.]

<p>1. In your district, what are the criteria that must be met in order for a student to be exited from English language instruction?</p>
<p>2. What is the district [school] procedure for exiting students from English language instruction?</p>
<p>3. What are the procedures for exiting EL students with disabilities? Do they differ from EL students without disabilities? If so, how? [Probe: Accommodations or modifications used to assess English language proficiency for ELs with disabilities]</p>
<p>4. What kinds of supports or services are provided to EL students with disabilities who are in the process of exiting or have recently exited?</p>
<p>5. What are the procedures for EL students with disabilities who are not able to meet exit criteria based on the state's English Language Proficiency assessment and have to use modified or alternative achievement standards?</p>
<p>6. What challenges does your district [school] face in assessing the English language proficiency of EL students with disabilities who require modified or alternate standards? What strategies have you used to deal with those challenges? Are they effective?</p>
<p>7. What challenges does your district [school] face in assessing the content knowledge of EL students with disabilities who require modified or alternate standards? What strategies have you used to deal with those challenges? Are they effective?</p>

## 9. Coordination Between EL and Special Education: Administrator Perceptions (RQ 3)

[Information on district/school organizational structure (e.g., org chart) will have been obtained via district/school web sites or request of district contact prior to site visit. It may be referenced during the questions below.]

<p>1. How does the organizational structure within the district [school] facilitate or hinder collaboration between special education and EL services?</p>
<p>2. Are there other mechanisms in place in the district [school] to facilitate the coordination of special education and EL services? What factors hinder coordination, if any?</p>

3. *What challenges, if any, do you or other relevant staff encounter when working with the EL (or special education) department/program? What strategies have you used to deal with those challenges?*

## 10. Additional Thoughts and Wrap-up

1. *Would you like to add anything about EL students with disabilities that we missed in our conversation?*

[Thank respondent again for his/her time and input, and obtain contact information for potential follow-up.]

*I want to reiterate that we very much appreciate you taking the time and sharing your knowledge and experience with us today. As is mentioned in the interview information sheet, after we return home and have had a chance to review our notes from this interview, we would like to have the option of a brief follow-up with you if there is a need to check our interpretation of information you've provided today. Would this be okay? [If participant agrees.]*

*Thank you. Do you have a preference for email or phone?*

[Obtain contact information for follow-up.]